THE INQUIRER

INCORPORATING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THE UNITARIAN HERALD

ORGAN OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY AND FREE RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

ESTABLISHED IN 1842 REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER

No. 5647 SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 1950 Price Threepence

JESUS AND PAUL

CHRISTIANITY AND JESUS OF NAZARETH

By Sir John Stewart-Wallace

"CHRISTIANITY without a Christ is scarcely a thinkable notion": wrote Mr. Crabtree in your issue of August 19. Christianity without Jesus of Nazareth, if we may accept Berdyaef, is a fact of history. Was it not he who said that the impressive structure of the Christian Church was the tomb of Jesus?

These words must give us pause. They imply that the teaching of St. Paul rather than of Jesus is the kernel of Christian theology and that that teaching would have surprised Jesus as much as it surprised the church of the apostles at Jerusalem. The difference is indeed profound. Jesus preached a religion of conduct, of experience, of the Spirit. His was the teaching of a new birth, a losing of life in order to find it; of a kingdom of Heaven in the hearts of men; of a service that was its own exceeding great reward; a kingdom transcending race, creed, colour, synagogue or church. He did not call on the Jews to give up being Jews. He pointed to the eternal verities of Humility, Charity, Forgiveness—a Forgiveness not only of our neighbours to seventy times seven but unto a Love and Compassion in our hearts for our very enemies from whom, in justice for wrong done, we might demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. These high things, he proclaimed, were the essentials of the kingdom not the tithes of mint and anise and cummin of the Jewish or any ceremonal religion—sacred and beautiful and worthy of all observance as those in their place might be.

Once again we ask our readers' forbearance. The small size of The Inquirer this week is due to the dispute in the London Printing Industry.

This high gospel is the Light that shined in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. Has the Christian Church itself comprehended it in all its effulgence? An effulgence, it is important for us of the twentieth century to note, that has not at any point conflicted with the discoveries of science or the expansion of our knowledge of history and stellar space.

Paul, differing from Jesus and filled with the beauty and the attractive force of age long religious custom, never transcended the concepts of priest and altar and the propitiatory shedding of blood. To Paul, Jesus was not the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount. He was the sacrificial lamb without spot or blemish; the traditional human victim whose blood had been shed, become the great high priest, the divine mediator.

The world, long attuned to such teaching and venerating such practices, could understand such a religion and in thankful adoration embrace the comforting doctrine of vicarious suffering. St. Paul's was the path for the many. The religion of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount has ever remained the gate that is strait and found by few. It was too high for men 2,000 years ago. It is too high for us today. Crucify him! Crucify him!—as mankind has done in every war it has waged.

Millions and millions have accepted Pauline Christianity and, in so far as in so doing they have embodied in their lives the Charity of St. Paul's deathless ode, the world has been comparably the richer and they have reached the heights. It is a commonplace, however, that the teaching of Jesus has never on a world scale even been tried. But we may rejoice that the tragedy of this is today being mitigated by many signs that men are turning more and more from the religions of priest and altar, myth, miracle and symbol to the great universals of the Spirit. A growing number inside and outside the Churches, begin to realise with awe that the teaching of Jesus enshrines in words such as never man spake the saving truths of the Vedic and Jewish prophets, of the Buddha, of Mahomet and of all the other great Spiritual Masters who throughout the ages have come. To use the beautiful Anglo-Saxon word, is not the Sermon on the Mount the very Godspell of that Fellowship of the Spirit, that transcendent *oneness*, seen as though through a glass darkly in all the great religions of the world? Of this *oneness* the world, breaking from the swaddling clothes of the traditional faiths, is ever becoming more conscious.

If we doubt with Mr. Crabtree whether we could have Christianity without Christology, we may be positive with all the fervour of a fundamentalist convert that in the Sermon on the Mount we have a universalist religion without dogma to raise men to the mountain tops of spiritual experience. A religion not limited to the Jew or to the Gentile; to the East or to the West. In it all are *one*. It is universal as the love of God, within the vast compass of whose care *all* his creatures are embraced—and that whether Russian, Korean or British. It is without money and without price. It is also without doctrinal affirmation or creedal limitation. It is of the Spirit: a way of life.

Bismarck's greatest mistake was perhaps when he said: "You cannot govern according to the Sermon on the Mount". The world today suggests our politicians cannot govern without it.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND BROADCAST

SIR,—Some members of Dunbarton Road Chapel listened in to the Broadcast Service from All Souls', Belfast, on September 24, and were delighted with the conduct of the Service by Dr. Agnew, the simplicity and directness of the prayers, and the very effective and persuasive sermon. It may have been due to the imperfections of the transmission that the singing did not come through as effectively as we should have expected from All Souls'. During the latter part of the sermon there was some interference with fading every half-minute or so, but otherwise the reception was very clear.

The broadcast was another happy example of Unitarian broadcasting, and we thank all those who were responsible for this inspiring Service.—Yours,

Arthur W. Wallace.

Aberdeen.

DR. L. P. JACKS—NONAGENARIAN

By Dr. G. Stephens Spinks

"BLESSED is he who continueth where he is." We had walked round the garden, gone into the apple shed, inspected the rose beds, crossed the fields to view six shiny black pigs who surveyed us without malice or interest, and returned to the house and the wood fire that burned on the low hearth. We had been talking of the latest book on John Ruskin—*Vindication*—and had moved by easy associational stages to the relationship of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle, thence to the strongly individualistic habits of Coleridge and Lamb, and to the fact that in spite of the slowness of their facilities for travel most of them had spent quite an amount of time "going places". And as we lowered ourselves into two comfortable chairs, L. P. Jacks delivered himself of the sentence with which we began.

Those who climb the long ascent that leads to "Far Outlook" and know the short cut across the field to the low brick and timber house, the third home that Dr. Jacks has built for himself on Shotover Hill, may come across its owner clad in a suit that has seen many winters and summers, with a black veil about his head, hiving bees who seem to know that they will be expertly treated, or else aloft on a ladder high up among the trees in the orchard. Few seeing him for the first time would guess from his physical vigour, the strength of his voice and handgrip, and the lively interest of his blue eyes, that here was a man who had passed the Psalmist's three score years and ten, and had added twenty thereto. His handsome white hair, his open-air complexion, and the gait which betrays the conviction that putting one's foot down on one's own soil is something peculiarly worth doing—all these belie the birth certificate and astonish the visitor.

If you did not buy a copy of his autiobiography, *The Confession of an Octogenarian* (1942), you will have to borrow one, for the two editions were sold out and the publisher's reply to your request is "out of print" or "reprinting no date" which comes to the same thing. On the title page are the words "By my God have I leaped over a wall"; turn a page or two and you will read "In me there dwells no knowledge of myself except the knowledge of my ignorance"; or a page or two further on, "were I to be asked 'are you in your old age, a happy man?' the best prompt answer I could give would be to tell the questioner that he had asked a foolish question". And then the reader finds that he is being told Anatole France's story of the search by a sick king for the shirt (with its restorative properties) of a perfectly happy man. The perfectly happy man was at length found, a man so poor that when the royal officials requested that they might buy his shirt, he had to reply, "Alas, messieurs, *I never had a shirt*". It may be doubted whether L. P. Jacks was ever in this state, but one suspects he knows by first hand experience and not by hearsay, that happiness, like health and righteousness, does not depend upon the abundance of the things one possesses. That was the wisdom of *Mad Shepherds* and many another of his books.

During one of many visits to the house on the hill, which like Bunyan's fabled house has more than one window opening towards the sun rising, I sat turning over the manuscript (not a typescript) of the English translation of the first of two books by Loisy[1] with which Dr. Jacks was employing his leisure. The translator was then eighty-eight, his intellect as clear as it was twenty-five years ago, the handwriting much more legible than much that comes my way. And when it came to reading proofs, those keen blue eyes were quick to detect a misplaced accent in a French quotation even when printed in small italics in a footnote. The younger man sitting by his side, watching the persistent, persevering efforts to keep an old and much valued pipe alight, found himself wondering what fairies attended his mentor's first appearance upon this planet; who taught him that "we are upon an engagement very difficult"; and what human being had influenced him most. If you had asked him, the answer would have been—Estlin Carpenter who had, so your host would assure you, "an incapacity to think evil of any man, and a tendency to convert geese into swans and to help them as swans deserve." And then, with something between a clearing of the throat and a low chuckle, he would add, "As for myself he would never believe I was not a swan. In reality I was a bird of very different feather, though not perhaps exactly a goose". Looking at that noble head, the repose of a body at ease in a familiar chair by a fire-side alight with wood of his own splitting, and with flowers arranged with skill about the room, one felt certain, in spite of disclaimers, that Estlin Carpenter was right; he knew his bird.

The visitor, weather permitting, may be taken for a walk across the Plain at the top of Shotover Hill. The five-barred gates to be climbed, the barbed wire to be negotiated upon the hands and knees, present no difficulty to the older man, so why should they to any younger than he? Or if the host's thoughts are in the past the return journey may be by way of a corner of the garden beyond the house where in an enclosed space there is a Canadian maple planted on a Golden Wedding Day; under its small shade set in a border of grass and bright flowers, is a small flat stone with a name on it and space for yet another name to be added on that day when two who once walked together may in that plot of earth, and on a brighter shore, be again united.

Lafayette

Dr. L. P. JACKS

Of his principalship of Manchester College, L. P. Jacks has selected his own epitaph. Friends and critics, of whom there were many, may interpret it as they will:

"He did his damndest;
What angel can do more?"

Of the forty-five years, during which, as editor of the *Hibbert Journal* he created a world platform for debate on the three fundamental disciplines of life, Religion, Theology and Philosophy, all will agree *si monumentum requiris* it is the *Journal*. And when he came to lay down his editorship, this old and experienced Elijah took off his ample mantle and helped his successor to take in the necessary tucks so that Elisha in its folds should have less occasion for stumbling.

But what shall we say of these ninety years, this vigorous life which rejoicing with Dr. W. R. Inge in his recent birthday celebration, assured the *quondam* Dean that he, L. P. J., had one advantage over his fellow nonagenarian, the possession of three great grand-children? Nothing can be said save words of affection and gratitude. On Monday, October 9, the Jacks family, their collaterals and in-laws will gather on the top of that hill—whence a man may look down on that Oxford which tends to look down on the world—and if the cynosure of their affection will turn his ear to all the breezes that will that day blow about the hill, he will hear the voices not only of his children, but also the voices of many sons, not of his family yet of his teaching, rising up and calling him blessed. Happy is the man who continueth where he is. Or, as the proof-readers have it—*Stet*!

[1] *The Birth of the Christian Religion* (Allen & Unwin) 1948; *The Origins of the New Testament* (Allen & Unwin) 1950.

THE STARS IN THEIR COURSES

By Basil H. Viney

UNTIL quite recently Astronomy was regarded as a "pure" science. Mathematical order reigned supreme throughout her realm. The solar system was a beautiful geometrical pattern. The planetary orbits were constant and reliable. Even the genesis of the system was quiet and gentle: vast nebula of incandescent gas gradually condensing into a central sun leaving behind it portions of itself which slowly solidified into planets. All this was accepted as recently as the turn of the century.

Then came startling changes. It was suggested that the planets had been pulled out of the sun by some great intruding star—possibly a dark star—generating a disruptive tidal movement in the sun as it passed. It is now suggested that the planets owe their origin to the explosion of the sun's "twin"—the sun having once been a double star. And now Immanuel Velikovsky[1] assures us that even the present stability of our solar system is a mere illusion; that even in historical times the earth has been violently perturbed by tremendous upheavals in the neighbouring planets, and that what has happened in the past may easily happen again.

According to Velikovsky, Venus was ejected from Jupiter in Old Testament days. For a while she was a comet, approaching very close to the earth, and was responsible for the heaping up of the waters in an enormous tidal wave which permitted the Israelites to cross the Red Sea dryshod—an electric discharge between her and the earth immediately afterwards causing the collapse of the wave-wall and the drowning of the Egyptians! On a later occasion Venus was responsible for the appearance of the sun standing still over Gibeon and the moon over Ajalon—possibly by the tilting of the axis (which "could produce the visual effect of a retrogressing or arrested sun") owing to the earth's "passing through a strong magnetic field at an angle to the earth's magnetic axis".

On other occasions Mars has approached dangerously near to the earth—usually with dire pestilential results!

These are just a few of the many amazing statements with which Velikovsky's book, *Worlds in Collision*, abounds.

What will the reaction of fundamentalists be? Here is an apparently scientific rehabilitation of some of the most staggering "miracles" of the Old Testament!—stories which have been rejected by all but fundamentalists for generations. But if they read the book their jubilation will be short lived. For Velikovsky is no fundamentalist. He makes no association between astronomical catastrophe and human misconduct, and gives no assurance that a utopian planet would be safe. Nor does he rely on the Hebrew scriptures alone. His book shows a research into myths of every land, comparable only to the research into superstitions in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. But if he is right they are myths no longer. It would be doing him no injustice to say that his argument is derived more from comparative folk lore than from science. He does indeed claim that his solar system presents a closer parallel than Newton's to the atomic systems disclosed by the newer physics. But what has impressed him most strongly are the parallel traditions in the folk lore of peoples wide apart as the Hebrews, the Aztecs, the Peruvians, and the Maoris; all of whom have stories of floods, of the sun standing still, of conflict in the skies. Even Greek mythology is pressed into the argument. Venus was literally born of Zeus (Jupiter); and Mars really has been malevolent. The Gods were the planets and astrology had origin in fact; though modern astrology is but decadent superstition.

What a gulf separates Velikovsky from Lardner, who thought all our planets might be inhabited by intelligent beings (would God have made them for nothing?) or from Alfred Russell Wallace (who thought our world had been providentially placed near the centre of the stellar system as the sole safe seat of human life!) I would not say the new theory is inconsistent with theism; but if generally accepted I am sure it would have an inimical effect on religious faith—even as Darwinian evolution, with its undue stress on struggle, had. Nevertheless it is so unhappily in harmony with the present state of the world that I fear it may impress beyond its evidential value (even as Darwinian evolution did, since it chimed in so nicely with *lassez faire* competivism).

But how much is there in it after all? What can the mere layman say?—except that the author himself appears to be more a biologist than an astronomer, and that most of the astronomers have merely laughed at him. Not that that necessarily proves much. Darwin had no science degree, and many of the biologists laughed at him; as they all did at his precursor, Lamarck.

Meanwhile I read, by a queer coincidence, that "Flying Saucers" are seriously believed by some of the greatest aerial experts in America, to be aircraft, far in advance of anything on earth, from some other planet! But it is generally agreed among astronomers now that no other planet in *our* solar system is stable or developed enough to have permitted the evolution of anything so high in the scale of life as the humanlike. And the nearest star is over four light-years away. So that even if that star had a world revolving round it, any inhabitants flying at the estimated speed of five miles a second from thence to our world would be about 150,000 years of age before they reached us! I know not which is more incredible—the theories of Velikovsky or those of the flying saucer enthusiasts: however much we might, despairing alike of human wisdom and divine intervention, welcome the advent of civilising missionaries from some sweeter saner planet!

[1] *Worlds in Collision*, by Immanuel Velikovsky. Gollancz, 15s.

Jesus did not set his own pre-eminence at the centre of his mission. He preached the kingdom of God; and when he sent out his assistants to proclaim it in the villages, he did not suggest that they should say one word about himself. Nor did he seek to attach man to his person or enlist supporters in a church. He did invite some individuals to be his companions and share his mission: but to most people his attitude is quite different. When he has preached to people, or cured them of diseases, he sends them away to their homes and businesses with no suggestion that they should permanently attach themselves to him, or keep in touch with his followers. Did he not care about their salvation? Surely the natural inference is that he knew that their salvation did not depend upon him. He accepted invitations from men with whom the Pharisees disdained to associate. Conventional interpreters (with aid from the evangelists) picture him going in somewhat self-righteous condescension. Why not accept his behaviour at its face-value, a recognition of these men as on a level with himself in the sight of heaven? It requires an effort to clear our minds of the associations of the conventional portrait. But is it not worth while, in order to catch a glimpse of the lowly servant whom God exalted?

Francis Terry

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer", 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

A SUGGESTION FROM THE UNITARIAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP

SIR,—I am writing on behalf of the Committee of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship. The Committee feels that we as a denomination are not making a strong enough witness for peace. Too long the Peace Fellowship has been ineffective because its time has been taken up with controversy between absolute Pacifists and sincere believers in peace who cannot go all the way with the Pacifists. This has led only to bitterness and not to fellowship. Our Committee has now a practical policy which it feels all will be able to support unreservedly, a proposal to bring a little healing to a very sick world.

On the morning the Committee met, I received an urgent appeal from a friend who has been working with tubercular cases in D.P. camps. The Organisation for which she works, the Guide International Service, has replaced her in Germany for three months to see if she can do something to arouse public interest in, and sympathy for these people. This is being done through seeking the collaboration of religious bodies and voluntary societies in this country who have opposite numbers in all parts of the world, who are equally anxious to help those in need.

There are many calls upon us, many piteous cases in the world, but these seem almost the most hopeless because T.B. is a disease of which people are very afraid and their instinct is to say, "Don't let us run the risk of having anything to do with it". That is why

the tubercular sick and their dependents are in a hopeless and helpless condition. No one wants them. Many of them say, "drown us". Would we feel justified in doing that? It is less kind to leave them without help. Some of them could be rehabilitated. All need looking after. With sufficient support a hospital could be provided, staffed partly by their dependents, in Canada or some other willing country; it could be paid for by contributions from all over the world.

Our Committee proposes to make this cause its special concern and to work along two lines; one is to make the tragic case of the tubercular D.P. as well known as possible and the second is to start raising a fund so that we shall be in a position to offer concrete help immediately a definite scheme is put forward. With generous denominational support, we could bring comfort to at least one or two families. Even a small amount will help individual cases and every case is precious. Will those in our churches who believe that we should help the cause of peace in work of good will support our effort by (*a*) sending in their names, (*b*) making the matter known, (*c*) sending a donation.

Further information will be sent to all church secretaries. Please send your donations as soon as possible to the Rev. W. Hill Wareing, 78 Blackburn Road, Padiham, Lancs.—Yours, *E. R. Vallance.*

THE INQUIRER

All letters and manuscripts for the Editor must reach the Office not later than Monday morning for publication the same week. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

Subscription Rates: 17s. 4d. per annum (post free).

Those having any difficulty in obtaining copies of the paper should communicate direct with the publisher.

Address: 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

TEL.: EUS. 7554. Editorial: EUS. 3912

NEWS REVIEW

NEWS FROM THE WEST

From our Western Correspondent

THE Western Ministers are holding their Annual Conference at Taunton, on October 9, the subject being "Adult Education and Religion", with the Rev. Barbara Thomas as the speaker. Most of the Western churches record very successful Harvest Festival Services and several have held or are about to hold Gift Days—an outstanding example being at Sidmouth, where over £116 was realised.

The Rev. H. D. Wiard is giving a series of lectures on "Modern Philosophers", at Bath. A Women's League Rally at Bridgwater attracted representatives of 12 Women's Societies. The 288th Anniversary of the Bridgwater congregation is being celebrated this month, with the Rev. J. Unsworth as the evening preacher. The Bridport Christian Council, representing all denominations except R.C.'s, is arranging a United Service this month. At Lewin's Mead, Bristol, it has been decided to revive the Annual Memorial Service to the Raja Ram Rohun Roy: Indian pilgrims, after a Civic Reception by the Lord Mayor of Bristol, attended a Memorial Service to the Raja at Lewin's Mead, recently.

At Clifton, the Rev. Marjorie Easton is giving fortnightly lectures on aspects of social life, and the Literary and Dramatic Society has arranged an attractive syllabus. The Cheltenham Women's League enjoyed an original "Shakespeare-revised" reading by Miss T. Flower Mills, and a talk by Mrs. Staddon on her holiday in Holland. Cullompton is planning to purchase a cinematograph for the Sunday School. A Young Peoples' League is being formed at Taunton. The union of Plymouth and Tavistock, under the joint ministry of the Rev. E. H. Kersley, was inaugurated at a Thanksgiving Service at Tavistock on the first Sunday in October.

At Moreton and Newton the Rev. C. G. Toone has an attractive series of sermon-subjects beginning with one on "Zoology and St. Francis". The Old Age Pensioners' Service at Newton had a record attendance of over 80 on a Sunday in September and the work which the church is doing for the aged is much appreciated in the town. At Torquay, arising out of the discussions at the Cambridge Conference of the Modern Churchmen's Union, much interest was aroused by a series of sermons by the Rev. C. W. Townsend on "The Archbishop and the Virgin Birth", "Modern Consciousness and the Miraculous", and "The Passing of Traditionalism".

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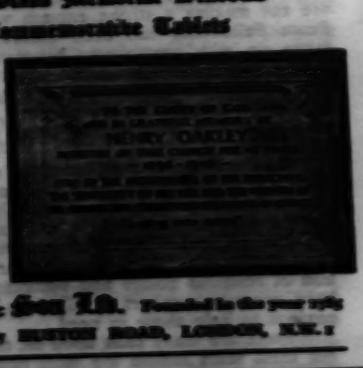

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MODERN FREE CHURCHMEN

AT the Annual Meeting of the Union of Modern Free Churchmen, at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on Saturday, September 23, the Conference topic, "Contemporary Trends in Liberal Religion" was introduced by Rev. H. Stewart Carter, of Cambridge. In the discussion which followed, speakers deprecated the reactionary tendencies apparent in certain quarters today. Intelligent and thoughtful people were being alienated from the churches of the various denominations because of their obscurantist views and unwillingness to break with outworn traditions.

An outstanding instance was the Papal proclamation of the doctrine of the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary as an article of faith to be accepted by members of the Roman Catholic Church. The Union gave general approval to the Archbishop's statement that there was neither Scriptural nor scientific evidence in support of the claim. Free Churchmen would no less strongly record their protest.

The following resolution was also unanimously agreed:—

"That this Annual Meeting of the Union of Modern Free Churchmen recognising the valuable contribution of the Modern Churchman's Union to the advancement of liberal religious thought during the last fifty years would affirm its support of the Modern Churchman's Union in its efforts to reform and restate Christian belief in the light of modern knowledge; and it looks forward to the time when all Christians, whatever the Church to which they belong, will combine intellectual honesty and integrity with a ministry to the spiritual needs of their day. In this aim the unity of the Spirit should be made manifest to the world, and might well lead toward that closer unity of organisation which is much to be desired."

Liverpool: Ullet Road.—History was made at Ullet Road, on Friday, September 22, when the first Congregational Supper ever to be held took place in the Church Hall. One hundred and sixteen members of the church and their friends attended and the repast was handled by the Fellowship of Youth in an excellent manner. The idea was that of the minister, Rev. E. Shirvell Price, and it is proposed to hold a similar supper four times a year. By a very fortunate accident the supper coincided with the visit to Liverpool of Rev. Lawrence and Mrs. Redfern, who were paying their first visit since leaving Ullet Road to commence their duties at our Bournemouth Church, and Mr. Price invited them to be the guests of the evening. During the evening Dr. J. E. Wallace gave a short pianoforte recital and several songs were also sung by members of the choir and friends. Mr. and Mrs. Redfern entertained the company with impressions of their new life in the South and there were also speeches by Mrs. Price and Mr. C. E. Booth, and, of course, by the minister. All those present felt that a new and very successful chapter in the life of the church had been commenced that evening and there is no doubt that the next one at the end of the year will be eagerly anticipated.

Stand.—Six members of Stand (Whitefield) Sunday School, who have completed 25 years service as officials, teachers or workers, were the recipients of the Sunday School Association Long Service medals, on Sunday, September 24, the occasion of the Harvest Festival and doubly appropriate was the fact that the presentations were made by the General Secretary, Rev. H. H. Cheetham, who was "a member of the team" at Stand up to February, 1947, and was able to testify from personal experience to the work done in the Sunday School by the six people concerned. Recipients of the medals were Miss E. Dickinson (Primary Dept. Leader), Miss D. Taylor Jones (Vice-Chairman of the School Committee), Mrs. T. Tanner (Junior Dept. Leader), Mrs. H. Horrocks (Junior Dept. Teacher), Mrs. J. Blant (Guide Captain) and Mr. R. Southern, B.Sc. (General Secretary of the Co-operative Union) whose service to the Sunday School includes 22 years as Superintendent, a position which he still holds.

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Printed at THE CHISWICK PRESS, 2 Clements Inn, Strand, London, W.C.2, and Published by THE INQUIRER PUBLISHING CO., LTD., at the Temporary Office, 14 Gordon Square, W.C.1.—Manchester (Wholesale) John Heywood, Deansgate. Saturday, Oct. 7th, 1950.